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CONSIDERING THE LEAP - BACK TO SCHOOL

Colleges everywhere are making up their enrollments these days from a largely untapped source - the student over 22 years old. These 022s, whether out of school 5 years or 20, have a myriad practical problems in common, not to mention the feelings of anxiety, fear and isolation which they share, unbeknownst to each other.

Out of Avila's present student population of 1694, 48% are non-traditional. The question is, therefore, what is Avila doing to smooth the way for the returning student?

Experimental Group Forms

To check this out, I began my investigation by attending a meeting of the W.I.N.G.S. (Women In New Growth Studies) group held in the Beanbag Room of the Counseling area. The members were as articulate and organized as grown women submerged in beanbag chairs could be. (They are petitioning the Student Life Director for a new meeting place). The group, aided by their Advisor, Dona Neuman, Chairperson of the Social Sciences Department, was finalizing plans for a back-to-school workshop.

Open to all interested students at Avila College (though so far no males have applied), the group meets every Monday, Thursday and Friday at noon to share experiences and to help solve problems unique to the 022s.

Student Chairperson is Judi Bradshaw, 11929 Sycamore, Grandview, Missouri, and student coordinator is Joleen Johnson, 1252 Stratford Road, Kansas City, Missouri.

Brooding Hatches W.I.N.G.S.

Joleen Johnson, (Mrs. Thomas G.), senior with a double major in Psychology and Social Work, a dentist husband and four kids, inadvertently began the W.I.N.G.S. movement when she undertook, for her senior project, to identify and to design a program to relieve the problems of the returning woman student.

In discussing the fledgeling W.I.N.G.S. movement, Joleen displays a keen insight into the needs, strengths and dilemmas of the 022. Women who come back, she has decided, have a great advantage over

young students in that they have more life experiences to draw on.

They come back during a low period, fed up with P.T.A. and volunteer activities; they have discovered that to get a good job, they need a B.A. Most are household executives, able to manage a demanding schedule.

"Women" is Joleen's trenchant comment, "have a keen sense of what they need for themselves. They might not know who they are, but they know who they are not."

A woman's need to care for others is paramount, so in going back to school she does not jeopardize her family. TV and housework are jettisoned; unnecessary shopping is eschewed. Kids develop, or so Joleen finds.

But what is the revolt of mother doing to father? Quite a bit, but not enough, Joleen says. Husbands verbally support their wives, but don't follow through. They are annoyed by wives' conflicting schedules, but proud of good grades. The W.I.N.G.S. group, gathered to ventilate frustrations, empathize with husbands who can not, and are planning to invite them to an open meeting.

In the short run, what do these 022 commuter students want? Their answer is, more social functions where they can meet each other, some sort of "Big Sister" contact program, and more academic counseling.

Matthew Dewey, 4, builds a pyramid as Sandy Wayman, 022 major in the B.A. plus one year Montessori teacher training program, and Miss Lena Wikramaratne smile encouragement.



W.I.N.G.S. PLANWORKSHOP

On January 26, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Continuing Education Department will sponsor a Back to School workshop in Room 423 of Borserine Centre. The fee of \$7.50 includes babysitting and lunch.

The workshop, staffed by faculty and 022's, will deal with psychological factors, tools available, and procedures for re-entering the college setting such as applying for admission, registration and financial aid. Registration in O'Rielly Hall, Room J.

A Chat with Miss Lena

Miss Lena Wikramaratne, Visiting Professor of Pre-School Education, plopped down onto the green carpeting in the Montessori classroom. Plump, diminutive and vivacious, she shared a game of triangles with the pre-school children as easily as she would take tea with a friend.

When the children left, I asked Miss Lena "Does it help to be little in dealing with children?" She answered, in her clear fluid British accent "No, one's size does not matter; it depends more on one's spirit. Grownups sometimes have a lack of joy, of a spirit of excitement over little things. Also," she added, "one must help children develop their own reality. Just now, the boys were playing games, but were seeing basic mathematical relationships between cubes and shapes."

Miss Lena, who visits Avila periodically to lecture to teacher training classes, sat in a child's chair at a wee table (furniture in children's sizes were a Montessori innovation) and reminisced about her mentor and life long inspiration, Maria Montessori.

Lena was privileged to work directly with Maria Montessori for over 4 years in India and in her native Ceylon, and was instrumental in securing Association Montessori Internationale accreditation for the Avila school.

The Montessori teacher training course, a point of attraction for 022s, will begin again on January 5 with Miss Lena lecturing from January 19-23.

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Jerald terHorst

WHAT DID NIXON DO?

Depending on when you get your newsletter during this month of postal madness, you are either being invited to come hear an important speaker at Avila or informed that he was here.

Be that as it may, Avila is presenting, free to the public, Jerald terHorst, who sprang into prominence when he resigned as Press Secretary to President Ford in protest over the pardoning of Richard Nixon. The talk will be on December 10 at 7:30 p.m. in the Goppert Theatre.

Concluding Avila's three-part symposium on Individual Rights, funded by the Missouri Committee for the Humanities, terHorst will explore the controversial issue "The Right to Privacy vs. Freedom of the Press."

A long time Washington correspondent for the Detroit News, terHorst is now a syndicated columnist and author of *Gerald Ford and the Future of the Presidency*.

Meanwhile, Back at the . . .

"We're counseling, we're counseling" say staff and faculty advisors, caught by burgeoning enrollments.

According to Lynn Cupkie, Dean of Students, he is working out a plan with Admissions to follow up a first call from an interested person in the 022 range by giving his or her name to W.I.N.G.S. for personal contact and to the Counseling and Related Services Center for ability testing, definition of interest/majors, and career guidance. Under the direction of Jay Bopp, aided by Donna Wilson and Kathleen Cochoit, a placement bureau and a learning skills center are being set up, and Veteran's benefits are certified.

The Business and Economics Department, whose present count of 433 shows an 800% increase since 1973, has two advisors, Sister Paulette Gladis, Chairman, and Larry Lewis, who share the task of directing students in planning individual academic programs. They estimate that two thirds of their students are 022s.

"When the non-traditional students first come in they're very insecure," comments Sr. Paulette. "Most of them need to be reassured that they can do it, and to be told that they have already taken the hardest step, in making the decision to come back."

The Nursing Department, with 420 students, has 40 R.N.s who have returned for a B.S. in Nursing. They can be put on an independent schedule, but must come in as sophomores and meet student requirements.

Of the over 400 students in Education and Psychology, says Sr. Marie Georgette Eschbacher, Chairman, roughly 50% are 022s and they get individual academic counseling.

The biggest benefit provided the 022s is the Child Care Center for children aged 2 to 5.

WHO'S DIRECTOR OF TESTING?

Carolyn Koppes (Mrs. Robert), Director of Continuing Education and Testing, is an 022 herself. After a 20 year hiatus to bear five children and get them into school, she spent two years at Avila, part time, finishing up a degree in Sociology (changing her major from the Home Economics she had pursued for 3 years at Cornell and Iowa State).

After graduation in 1972, Carolyn began work in the testing center, gradually assuming her present duties. Previously active in parish work at St. Ann's, Prairie Village, Carolyn now says her hobby is working.

Of the Testing Center, she says "We hope to give the over 22 student the opportunity to test out of material he already knows through the CLEP (College Level Examination Program) and various other course challenges.

"Continuing Education supports the idea that life long learning will lead to something better in life. Avila keeps a record of non-credit educational activities that can be accumulated, updated and transferred."

Carolyn Koppes

